

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 184

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 89

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 184—Relative to Portuguese National Heritage Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State July 11, 2016.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 184, Salas. Portuguese National Heritage Month.

This bill would recognize the month of June 2016 as Portuguese National Heritage Month.

WHEREAS, In September of 1542, Portuguese explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo sailed a ship into San Diego Bay and became the first European to explore the land now known as California. Cabrillo explored the California coast, and is credited with numerous coastal discoveries; and

WHEREAS, The first Portuguese settlers came to California from the Azores Islands in the early 19th century. The largest wave of Azorean immigrants moved to California just before and after the turn of the 20th century. Each wave contributed substantially to setting up agricultural operations, especially dairy, vegetable, and fruit farms; and

WHEREAS, Throughout most of the 20th century, as many as one-half of all Portuguese Californians owned or operated a dairy farm, worked on a dairy farm, or worked in a dairy-related industry. Applying the Portuguese belief in hard work and thriftiness, along with additional labor from family members, a Portuguese settler could earn enough to reinvest in his business, and buy more land and cattle; and

WHEREAS, Historically, California has been a popular destination for immigrants from the Azores Islands, creating strong cultural ties between the two regions; currently there are more than 381,000 persons of Portuguese heritage living in California, approximately 90 percent of whom have either come directly from the Azores Islands or are of Azorean parentage; and

WHEREAS, In 1979, the Center for Portuguese Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, was founded for the purpose of promoting and developing Portuguese studies in California and in the United States; and

WHEREAS, In 1994, the University of California, Berkeley, established the Portuguese Studies Program. Included among the many goals of the program is the goal “to spotlight the crucial and complex but often overlooked experience and contributions of the Portuguese-American community”; and

WHEREAS, In 1999, the Center for Portuguese Studies at the California State University, Stanislaus, was established to promote the study of the Portuguese-speaking world’s language, history, culture, and influence. The

center works to enrich the connections among the local Portuguese community and its cultural and linguistic heritage and to forge new connections between countries of the Portuguese-speaking world and California's central valley; and

WHEREAS, Among the great Portuguese Americans who have contributed significantly to this country are: composer John Philip Sousa, best known for composing "Stars and Stripes Forever"; poet Emma Lazarus, best known for her sonnet about the Statue of Liberty, "The New Colossus"; architect William L. Pereira, best known for designing the Transamerica Pyramid in San Francisco; and singer and actress Carmen Miranda. Many Portuguese Americans have also served with distinction in local, state, and federal office, and have served proudly in this country's military; and

WHEREAS, Portuguese Americans have made valuable and substantial contributions to every facet of California life including the entertainment industry, the most notable of whom are Mary Astor, Tom Hanks, Joe Perry, and James Franco; and

WHEREAS, Portuguese Americans continue to thrive in agricultural communities of the San Joaquin Valley, including Hanford and Lemoore in Kings County and Shafter, Wasco, and Bakersfield in Kern County; they have contributed greatly to making market milk the leading agricultural product by value in both the Counties of Kings and Kern; and

WHEREAS, The Portuguese Heritage Society of California built the Portuguese Historical Museum to serve as a center for the display of Portuguese heritage and culture. In addition to its permanent exhibits, it will house and host exhibits and cultural programs from various organizations and the many Portuguese communities in the United States and around the world; and

WHEREAS, The Portuguese Heritage Society of California designated the second Saturday of June as a day to celebrate Portuguese culture through music, dance, art, cooking, parades, and other festivities; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby declares the month of June 2016 as Portuguese National Heritage Month; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.